Estonian Academy of Arts Proceedings

# Art and the Church
# Kunst und Kirche

## Religious Art and Architecture in the Baltic Region in the 13th–18th Centuries

## Kirchliche Kunst und Architektur in der baltischen Region im 13.–18. Jahrhundert

Conference dedicated to the centenary of Sten I. Karling in Tallinn, Sept. 6.–9, 2006

*Institute of Art History of Estonian Academy of Arts*
*Institute of History of Tallinn University*

Konferenz dem hundertjährigen Jubiläum von Sten I. Karling gewidmet in Tallinn, 6.–9. September, 2006

*Kunsthistorisches Institut der Estnischen Kunstakademie*
*Historisches Institut, Universität Tallinn*

*Edited by*
Krista Kodres, Merike Kurisoo

18/ 2008

EESTI
KUNSTIAKADEEMIA

The publication has been supported by
Estonian Science Foundation (ETF) grant No. 6900
Tallinn University Institute of History
Cultural Endowment of Estonia

Copy Editor in English Richard Adang
Copy Editor in German Esther Grünberg
Design and layout by Andres Tali

© Eesti Kunstiakadeemia 2008

ISSN 1406-2895
ISBN 978-9985-9841-6-1

Printed by AS Pakett

# Contents

Introduction. By **Krista Kodres** 7

**Krista Kodres**
„Aus dem Volk selbst herausgewachsen“ Sten Karling and his book „Holzschnitzerei und Tischlerkunst der Renaissance und des Barocks in Estland“ 9

**Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann**
Art and the Church in the Early Modern Era: The Baltic in comparative perspective 20

**Kersti Markus**
Zwischen Heidentum und Christentum. Die frühe Sakralkunst auf Ösel in Estland 41

**Giedrė Mickūnaitė**
The Crucifixion from the Vilnius Cathedral: Integration of Faith and Translation of Skill 57

**Uwe Albrecht**
Vom wechselvollen Umgang mit Bildern. Ein spätgotischer Katharinen-zyklus wird wieder entdeckt 68

**Anu Mänd**
Liturgical Vessels in Medieval Livonia in the Light of Written Evidence 82

**Sergiusz Michalski**
Die Bilderfrage um 1500 zwischen Thomismus und Frühhumanismus 104

**Markus Hiekkanen**
"The Stripping of Altars" on the Fringes of Europe. The 17th Century Relocation and Rearticulation of Finnish Medieval High Altars after the Reformation 119

**Marcin Wisłocki**
Houses of God, Gates of Heaven. Doors of Grace. Lutheran Church Interiors as "Holy Places"? The Case of Pomerania 131

**Lars Olof Larsson**
"Docere, movere und delectare". Rhetorische Aspekte in der religiösen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts in Nordeuropa 155

**Janis Kreslins**
Reading to See and Feel: Textuality and Religious Identity in Early Modern Europe 178

**Lars Ljungström**
Piety and Learning. The Emblematic Chapels of Count Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie 190

**Ojars Sparitis**
Das Patronatsgestühl in evangelisch-lutherischen Kirchen Lettlands als Zeugnis des sozialen Standes 222

**Aleksandra Aleksandravičiūtė**
The Interior of the Lutheran Evangelic Church in Catholic Vilnius: Eighteenth Century Lutheran Stucco Sculpture and Its Background 261

**Rūta Kaminska**
The Re-Catholisation of Eastern Latvia and its Influence upon the Churches in Polish Livonia 280

Index of names 301

Index of places 307

Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann

# Art and the Church in the Early Modern Era: The Baltic in comparative perspective

"History is, first of all, geography."[1] This dictum of the great nineteenth-century French historian Jules Michelet comes to mind when one considers the question of the relation of art to the church in the Baltic region. By Baltic region is meant the lands surrounding the Baltic sea, in short the Baltic. There is much to say in reference to the Baltic region about the symbolism of individual monuments, their relation to theology and devotional practices, their role in supporting the church as a means of social cohesion and control and as a unifying force, and many other subjects concerning religion in relation to art and architecture. Many of these topics are discussed in other essays in this volume. This paper, however, looks at these matters from a particular perspective, which sees historical issues within the framework provided by what may be called the geography of art.[2] From this perspective, which is necessarily comparative, it concentrates on a few issues, some of them well known, but approaches them in a different fashion. It takes up questions of materials and styles, treating them in a framework meant to provide a general understanding from which other specific issues of art and the church in the Baltic may be approached.

Geography involves, first of all, physical circumstances and climate. Human habitation in parts of the Baltic extends north far above the Arctic circle. Even places like Tallinn and Stockholm, which are relatively southerly in this regard, are situated far to the north of most other important cities. To put things in perspec-

1 "L'histoire est tout d'abord géographie", J. Michelet, *Histoire de France,* 2, Paris 1867, p. 2.

2 For a perspective on the topic offered here, and much bibliography, see T. DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art*, Chicago and London 2004.

tive, you may consider that New York City is located about at the latitude of Naples, and Princeton lies somewhere south of Paestum.

In contrast, in places such as Estonia one may have the pleasure of experiencing brilliant long days and sunlit nights in summer, but one may also have to endure exceedingly short days in what really becomes the dark of winter. Snow covers large areas long after a thaw has occurred elsewhere in Europe. Many stretches of land around the Baltic littoral, especially on its southern rim, are flat, with dunes or bogs originally punctuating the plain relief of terrain. Much of this land was also originally wooded, with more or less dense forests, and covered with evergreens to the east and north. The experience of immense reaches of primal forest is still to be had in parts of Scandinavia, where, for instance in Sweden, one may still travel through extensive and dense woods and, of course, this experience is also available on a reduced scale in parts of Estonia. However, in contrast to the arable lands which are found in some other parts of Scandinavia, especially Jutland, stretches of Scania and some of the Danish islands, elsewhere marshy or sandy or silty soil initially covered a great deal of territory, making the lands especially around the southern and eastern coasts relatively unfavorable for farming of the sorts which were regularly practiced in the rest of Europe.

With its gulfs and bays, the Baltic Sea lies in the center of all these territories, linking the area which gives the region its name. Because with its various arms the Baltic is largely surrounded by land, distances between points are relatively limited, and the Baltic remains more navigable than many other oceans. Perilous as it may have been for earlier sailors, and rough as it is at times, it is still not subject to the extremely violent storms – including hurricanes or tsunamis – that frequent the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, nor even the swells and squalls of the North Sea. Inlets and rivers bring fresh water into the Baltic and create currents which have favored an abundance of fish for ages. These rivers also help form some natural basins or harbors, which create distances that are not so great between points. The result is that, for millennia, human beings have had a great deal of commerce, both of a peaceful and of a destructive kind, across and around this sea. All this makes for singular circumstances, which in turn affect what can happen in the history of the arts, and of religion, the subjects whose connection brings us here.

We may look at these conditions with Michelet's dictum in mind. Michelet reminds us that geographical factors, while not necessarily determinants of historical events, actions or, in our case, artistic or architectural products, supply some of the most important parameters which define the bounds and establish the preconditions within which human action and creation can occur. Michelet was, of course, not the first French writer to emphasize the importance of geography in history. Already in the sixteenth century, Jean Bodin applied geographical distinctions to

the customs and characters of contemporary European nations and, in his *Methodus* (1566), to history as well. He argued for a kind of environmental determinism, wherein climate shapes not only the character but also the history of a people, and these then shape its customs, as represented in government and other institutions.[3] We might think of the church in this context. In the early eighteenth century, Abbé Du Bos laid out a lengthy theory of the effects of climate on culture; in his *Reflexions* of 1719, he specifically discussed painting, and the other visual arts. Better known is probably Montesquieu, who, in the *Spirit of the Laws* of 1748 (*L'esprit des lois*), advances the familiar theory of the effects of climate and land on laws and society. Northern climes lead to freedom; harsh or warm climes to indolence and despotism.[4]

Whether or not he drew from these illustrious predecessors, Michelet provided the most directly relevant antecedent for the discussion which was to be carried on in French historiography, through the writings of such notable luminaries as Lucien Febvre, Fernand Braudel and even Michel Foucault.[5] For present considerations, Braudel is the most pertinent of these writers. In his magisterial book on the Mediterranean in the age of Philip II, Braudel traced a history which runs on two levels: there is the *longue durée*, the longer run of things, in which geographical and other climatalogical factors play a role, and there is the much more restricted *histoire evenementielle*, the history of events. Although Braudel's book was, nominally, about a particular period in history, namely the late sixteenth century, it seems to devote less attention to this latter realm of events than to the *longue durée*.[6]

Braudel's treatment of the Mediterranean no doubt provides many insights for historians who might want to think about that other enclosed European sea, the Baltic, and it certainly has a relevance for the history of art. Braudel encourages reflection on how questions concerning art and the church may be situated in a still broader perspective than one that is merely concerned with society or its institutions, a perspective that is informed by larger conceptions of geography, in the present case by the geography of art. The geography of art is, indeed, even more all-encompassing than the physical geography of the sort that has so far been discussed, because it can be defined as taking into account additional issues, such as what the particular environmental factors are (not just physical or climatalogical,

3 See C. Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore. Nature and Culture in Western thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, Berkeley 1967, p. 445.

4 See further for these and other eighteenth-century figures Kaufmann 2004, p. 35–38.

5 For a discussion of the contribution of these and other twentieth-century thinkers to the geography of art, see Kaufmann 2004.

6 F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Vol. 2, New York 1972–1973.

but societal, economic, personal, psychological and material ones) that determine circumstances and either discourage or encourage change; how these changes are to be defined, in the sense of style; how changes in styles are spread, and how they, in this sense, become successful; and finally how they cease.[7]

Authors associated with the Baltic region in the early modern period, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, already had something to say about these questions. From their writings one can also deduce the implicit formulation of a thesis that general geographical conditions, including such factors as local circumstances, climate and materials as they relate to local conditions are involved in the making of art in the Baltic. Moreover, these early Netherlandish, Polish and Swedish writers were, in this regard, heirs to a tradition of architectural commentary stemming from the ancient Roman writer Vitruvius. The existence of this intellectual tradition also suggests that additional factors are also concerned. That is, because writings on the Baltic may be placed in a longer European tradition, which reaches back to antiquity, learned or high culture, either written or visual in the form of art and architecture in the Baltic region, may itself be seen to have resulted from a process of cultural transmission.[8] Other factors that affect this transmission may be added, including commerce, political relations and ideas, and religion itself.

The theory of cultural transfer was first formulated to deal with questions of the cultural transmission of ideas in more recent centuries. The concept of cultural transfer has, however, subsequently been applied to earlier periods. Along with the transmission of ideas, this theory may take into account the transfer of religious beliefs: most conspicuously for the Baltic region, Christianity. The theory of cultural transfer has, moreover, been utilized for explanations of the way in which more than just ideas or, in the present case, spiritual culture, and also its products, namely elements of material culture – in more traditional language, art and architecture – may be passed from one place to another. Approaches informed by such theories may thus focus on objects which are regarded as the vehicles for cultural transfer, as well as the agents of the process, that is, on the people who effect cultural transfer.[9] To make things more concrete and immediate: cultural transfer takes into account the materials, or evidence offered by the large quantities of prints, paintings, medals, sculptures, and ideas for

---

7 For these definitions, see T. DaCosta Kaufmann, "Early Modern Ideas about Artistic Geography Related to the Baltic Region", *Scandinavian Journal of History* 28 (2003), p. 264.

8 See further Kaufmann 2003.

9 This argument reprises some comments made in T. DaCosta Kaufmann, "Cultural Transfer and Arts in the Americas", S. Stratton-Pruitt (ed.), *The Virgin, Saints, and Angels: South American Paintings 1600–1825 from the Thoma Collection*, Stanford and Milan 2006, p. 18–25. For these notions in general, see W. Schmale (ed.), *Kulturtransfer. Kulturelle Praxis im 16. Jahrhundert*, Wiener Schriften zur Geschichte der Neuzeit 2, Innsbruck 2003.

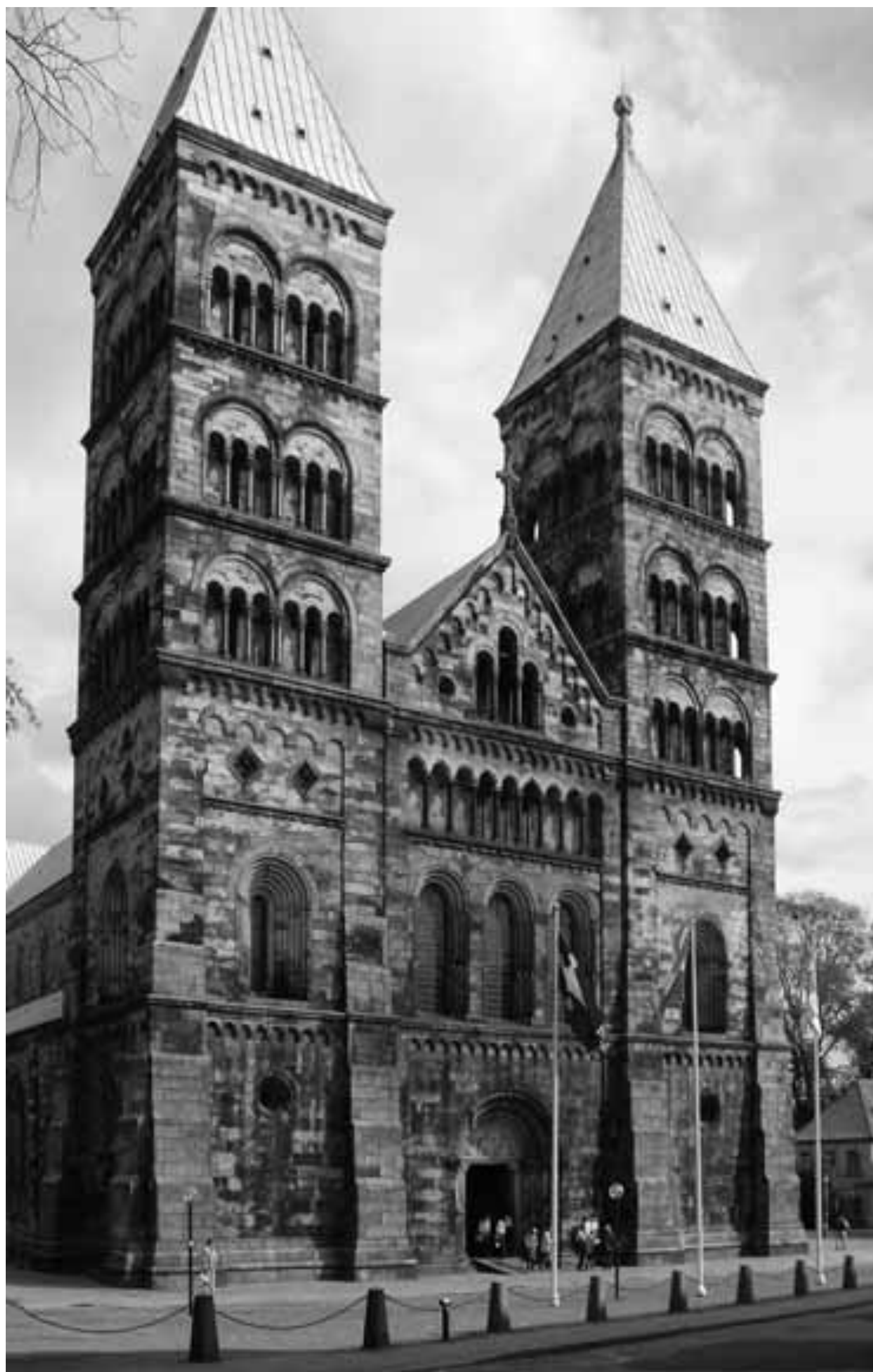
buildings, and the peoples who brought them, that came from other regions to the Baltic. Within these geographical parameters, cultural transfer takes place.

Because of the simple fact that Christianity, along with other surviving religions, was transferred to this region, the Baltic can also not be seen as stopping simply at the Sound, its physical limit. For at least the past thousand years, the Baltic has been connected with many places and peoples beyond the Oresund, and these have mediated the transfer of culture, at times peacefully, at times not. For this reason alone, since religion and the art connected with it in this region are both results of cultural transfer, it is also necessary to consider issues in a geographical perspective which is at the same time comparative, relating what happened in the Baltic to phenomena elsewhere.

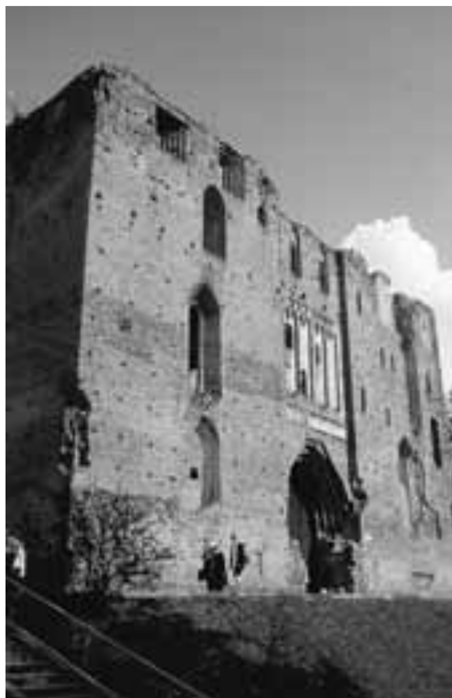
A basic fact of physical geography underlies everything, determining why cultural transfer was involved, and why it came relatively late when it did. The Baltic region lies in the far northeast of Europe, remote from Greece or Rome or other centers of classical antiquity, and from the near East, the cradle of all western civilization. While it is true that Roman coins have been found in Scandinavia, that slaves and other goods were traded south, and that even Herodotus knew vaguely about some of the peoples in the remote northeast, the bounds of the ancient Roman empire ended far away. So, for that matter, did its successor states, such as the Byzantium, Carolingian, and even Ottonian empires of the early middle ages.

As is the case with other geographically remote regions, remote not only in terms of physical geography but in the sense that they are far from the centers in which the major currents of European art and culture originated, the Baltic region may be regarded as having received what is now its dominant religion – Christianity – and the art and architecture connected with it, through a belated process of cultural transfer .

Christianity was confined, at first, within the bounds of the Roman Empire, and when it began to spread, it therefore came late to the northeast. Not only Germanic groups, originally touched by the Carolingians and Ottonians, but the southern and western Slavs, and even the Russians in the east, had actually been Christianized long before many of the peoples of the region were baptized. After the Danes and Swedes became Christian a millennium ago, it took a process of several centuries, including violent crusades, military orders who occupied parts of the region, colonization by German-speaking peoples and other massive efforts at conversion for other peoples of the Baltic region gradually to become Christian. This process was still going on long after it had concluded in other regions. The Lithuanians were only converted largely because of the decision of their king in the late fourteenth century, holding out in some cases into the fifteenth century. The other still existent religions of Europe (Judaism, and only in more recent times Islam), with the



Cathedral of Lund. 12th–19th century. Photo: E. Urbel.



Cathedral of Tartu/Dorpat. 13th–14th century.
Photo: K. Kodres.

exception of the Karaites, did not play an important role here until still later, and because of the emphasis of this volume on the periods of Christian domination, one may perhaps fore-go speaking about the still insufficiently known "pagan", that is non-Christian, traces, except that the arts had consequences for the conversion of populations that had long held to their own beliefs.

Physical conditions, geographical location, and attendant historical circumstances of the sorts mentioned so far brought forth an ecclesiastical architecture which is extraordinary in some of its forms, sizes, styles and choice of materials. Early monuments, especially if those in northern Germany be counted, on the one hand, resemble those that could be found elsewhere. Some structures in Denmark, St. Canute's church in Odense and, in what is now Sweden, the churches of Lund or later Strängnas may be related closely to architectural developments on the continent. The major Romanesque monument in what is now Sweden, the church in Lund, was probably built by masons and other craftsmen from the Rhineland and perhaps from Italy – it reveals traits of a style known as Lombard, because of the prevalence of buildings with similar characteristics in that area of northern Italy. This also points southward to the religion which was responsible for such structures. The stylistic appearance of such buildings obviously supports the process of cultural transfer. Occasionally, churches were later constructed in stone throughout the region.[10]

But so far as older buildings go, churches made, in whole or in part, of stone, such as that at Lund, are not to be taken as being the most characteristic structures of the region, and they might even be regarded as the exception rather than the rule. Because of a lack of good stone in much of the area, from early on brick has long been the predominant material used for churches, as well as for secular buildings. From a very early date, brick architecture has characterized Christian edifices in the

10 Some of the issues treated in these paragraphs are also discussed in the very useful survey by L. O. Larsson, "Konstnärlig utveckling: bildkonst i Östersjöns historia", J. Kreslins, S. A. Mansbach, R. Schweitzer (eds.), *Granländer. Östersjön i ny gestalt*, Stockholm 2003, p. 257–283.

area that runs eastwards from Hamburg, extending from Lübeck (or Schleswig) in the west to Tartu in the East, and of course brick was used to build civic structures as well. Brick was already employed in the romanesque period (as elsewhere in the Carolingian), and in the gothic it led to the construction of that distinctive style of architecture which is called, after the material, *Backsteingotik*, brick gothic. Brick could be utilized for the construction of quite large and impressive churches, such as we see in the middle of this region, at Gdańsk, where in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the prominent St. Mary's Church rose. Brick was used right through the middle ages, and at the end of the period, when the flamboyant gothic began to appear in France, it was employed for such extraordinary structures as St. Anne's Church in Vilnius. With certain stylistic variations, brick continued to be used throughout the time period with which this essay is concerned – indeed through the twentieth century (the Town Hall, in Stockholm). Hence, the use of brick might be described as a sign or effect of the longue durée in the geography of art.

This well-known phenomenon may be considered in relation to the question of the comparative geography of art and the church, in order to see what the use of brick might further have meant, and how it was used in sometimes extraordinary ways. Brick is, of course, a material common to an even wider band of northern Europe (including the British Isles), from the Low Countries to the Baltic, wherever similar conditions are to be found. It is, in fact, likely that ideas about the construction of buildings, especially churches, came from elsewhere, and that brick ecclesiastical architecture can be associated, from its beginnings, with the advent of Christianity. There are signs that this material, which we take to be so common, might in fact have been prized: in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, bricks, which were so common for Netherlanders as to be placed as ballast on ships which came from the Low Countries, because of their quality in relation to local possibilities, could be taken once they had been unloaded and utilized as choice material for building construction in places like Gdańsk. Good old brick has also been valued in more recent times, when for example the town of Elbląg was cannibalized for its bricks in order to rebuild the Old City of Warsaw.

Brick was certainly, at first, an unusual material for construction in this area. Adam Miłobędzki once calculated that, in the early modern period, the overwhelming preponderance of building, especially in Poland, must have been from wood, and we may add other perishable materials in the Baltic, such as turf, and wattle and daub.[11] Thus, to build a house of worship in a more permanent material such as brick meant to do something special.

---

11 See A. Miłobędzki, "Architecture in Wood: Technology, Symbolism, Content, Art", *artibus et historiae* 19 (1989), p. 177–206.

A comparative perspective is informative here, and it is provided by the voices of other Christian figures speaking of the attitudes of non-Christian peoples toward brick. The seventeenth-century French ambassador to Siam, Simon de la Loubère, compared building practices of the Thais, who constructed in bamboo and on stilts, and made even their palaces out of wood. In contrast, Europeans and other foreigners in Thailand deliberately built in brick, and seem thereby to have introduced the idea that for more important buildings, such as temples and palaces, one should build in this material; the Thais are said to have adopted building in brick in order to distinguish such structures.[12]

In addition to the use of material as a sign of distinction, something similar may be said for elements of style. Romanesque and gothic architecture are so customary in Europe that it may be missed how even the appearance of an arch may have been significant to peoples who were mainly used to post and lintel construction. Here an example from colonial Peru helps. The Incas and other native American peoples had stone constructions, but they did not have the arch. So it has been argued that the striking imposition of arches on portals and elsewhere in church buildings signifies that colonial churches are visible signs of conversion, manifesting a architecture of conquest.[13]

Conquest, or at least the Church Militant, is certainly manifest in some of the most striking brick buildings of the region, as seen most prominently at Marienburg/Małbork. Marienburg was, of course, the center of the Teutonic knights in this region. It is the largest single building complex of the Middle Ages in Europe. Its existence as a combined monastery/fortress complex/church derives from the geographical-historical situation, of Christian crusade and conflict against pagans. A series of conflicts also led to the construction of the most extensive belt of fortresses of the later Middle Ages – most of them in brick – located roughly along the Niemen River, which divided Christians from pagans. In accord with Marienburg came many other sites such as Marienwerder/Kwidzyn. The type of fortress design that they represent may also be related to other buildings which seem to possess a military, defensive character, such as the choir of the Königsberg/Kaliningrad cathedral.[14]

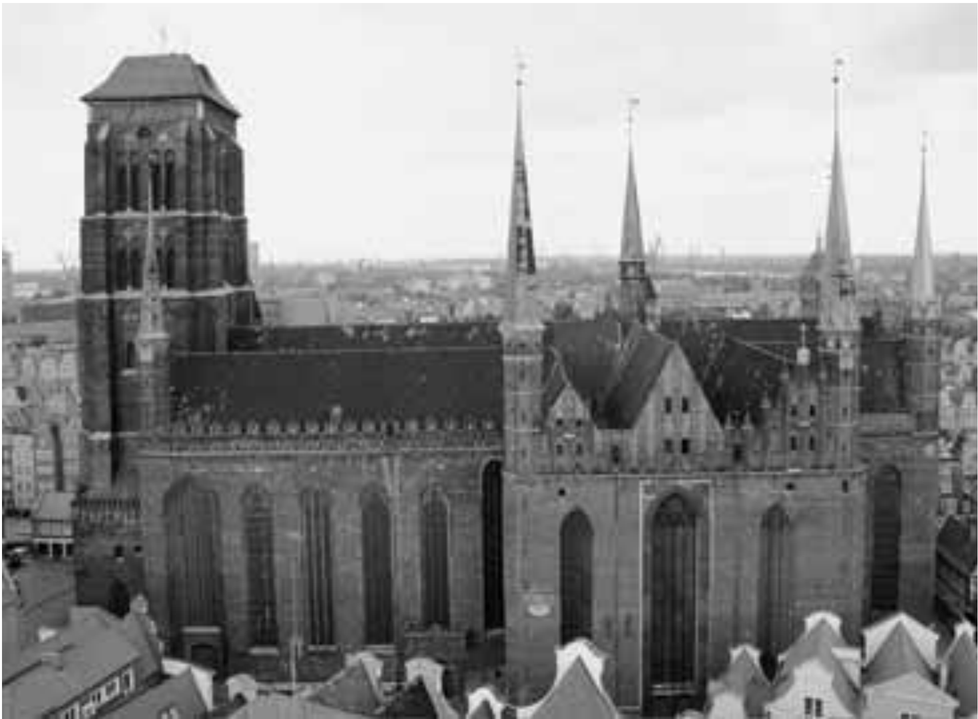
Military, defensive purposes have been proposed as the reason why such buildings were built in this manner, but again the question may perhaps be profitably

---

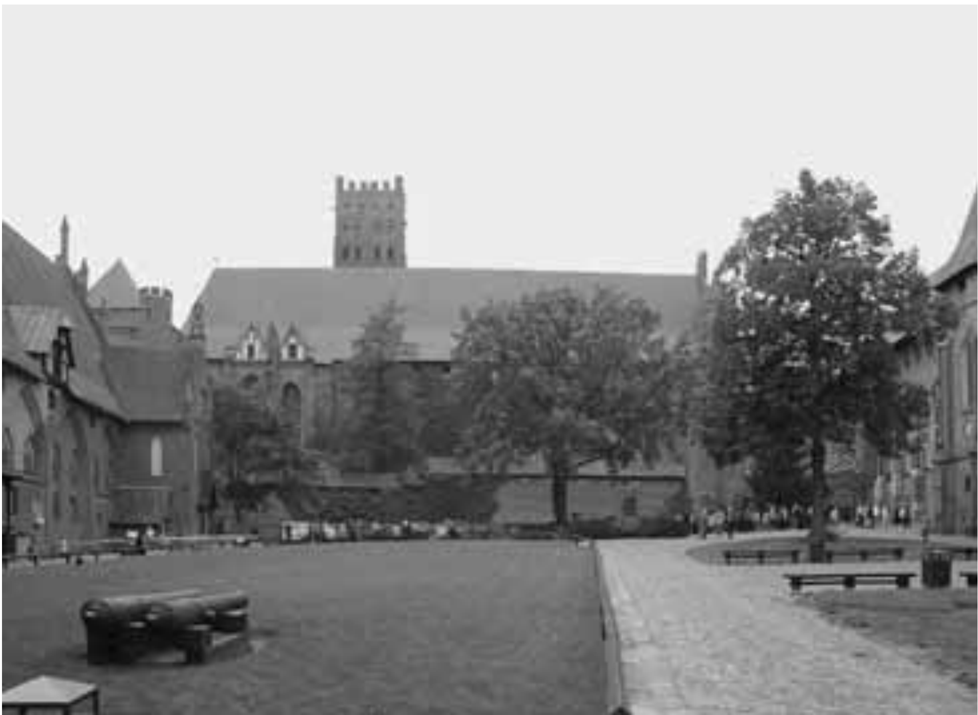
12 See S. de la Loubère, *The Kingdom of Siam*, Singapore, Oxford, New York 1986, p. 29–33.

13 V. Fraser, *The Architecture of Conquest. Building in the Vice-royalty of Peru 1535–1635*, Cambridge 1990.

14 A good recent survey of these monuments is provided by C. Herrmann, *Burgen im Ordensland. Deutschordens- und Bischofburgen in Ost- und Westpreußen. Ein Reisehandbuch*, Würzburg 2006.



Church of St. Mary in Gdansk/Danzig. 13th–14th century. Photo: M. Kalm.



Castle of Malbork/Marienburg. 13th–15th century. Photo: M. Kalm.

Cathedral of Kaliningrad/Königsberg, Ostpreussen. 14th–15th century. Photo: Dokumentation einer historischen Provinz. Die photographische Sammlung des Provinzialdenkmalamtes in Königsberg. Instytut Sztuki Pan, Warszawa.

put in a comparative perspective. One may think here of other contemporaneous crusades, not only into the Holy Land, but also in other parts of Europe, as against the Moslems in Spain, in southwestern France, or against the Albigensians. After the Catholic conquest of Albi, there arose in this former center of the Cathars another brick cathedral, with curtain walls, attached buttresses and towers, which looks much like a fortress, as has often been said.[15] It has often been assumed that this church was also built with defensive purposes in mind. But is this necessarily the case? To build such a church took many years, and construction thus extended long after the period of conflict; moreover, presumably such a large undertaking could not have occurred if the area had not been largely pacified.

Here it might be helpful to look to yet another area in which a kind of religious conflict, or has been said, "spiritual conquest", occurred. This is New Spain, present-day Mexico, where we also find monastic churches that seem to be fortresses – indeed, they have been called fortress monasteries. Characteristic are such buildings as the monastery church at Huejotzingo, which possesses flat, stone walls, crenelations up top and a walled gateway. It was long assumed that this church was so built because it was located in what was thought to have been a relatively underpopulated, exposed area on the frontier.[16]

However, it has been determined that the present church at Huejotzingo was not situated in a remote region, where defensive measures might have been necessary. It was situated in what was a highly populated site, where defense would not, in any case, have been practical, particularly because very few monks – maybe less than a dozen – were

15 For a scholarly study of the architecture of the Cathedral, see J. L. Biget, "La cathédrale Sainte-Cécile d'Albi. L'architecture", *Congrès Archéologique de France* 140 (1982), p. 20–62.

16 For a discussion of this problem, see T. DaCosta Kaufmann, "Islam, Art, and Architecture in the Americas: Some Considerations of Colonial Latin America", *Res* 43 (2003), especially p. 45–47.

living in the midst of a large indigenous population. The present church is also the second such structure on the site, and what is now seen was built more than a generation after the Spanish had arrived.[17] When one looks at the standing church at Huejotzingo, and then turns back to Albi or Marienburg, or even better, Kaliningrad, one may well wonder if the fortress style, as at Kaliningrad, served so much a functional purpose as a symbolic purpose. Were not such churches rather conceived in the spirit that would later be articulated by Martin Luther – whose followers later took over the use of many such churches – as "A Mighty fortress is Our God, a Bulwark never faileth."

With these words in mind, we can turn to the period from which they came, more generally, the years just before and after Luther. If the patterns of cultural exchange in connection with religion were ones conditioned by conflict in the dynamic period of Christianization (and colonization) in the early and high middle ages, by the later fifteenth century they were related more directly to those of commerce, which, as suggested, were facilitated by the easy connections around the Baltic and the trading networks which grew up as a result. A colonial relation still pertained, but it was one of economics as much as conquest, in which patterns of cultural exchange were related to those of commerce. In this early example of a classic colonial economic relationship, raw materials such as grain, timber, and iron were exported from the Baltic lands, and in return finished goods, among them luxury items, including what are now regarded as works of art, were sent back to the Baltic. These included altarpieces.

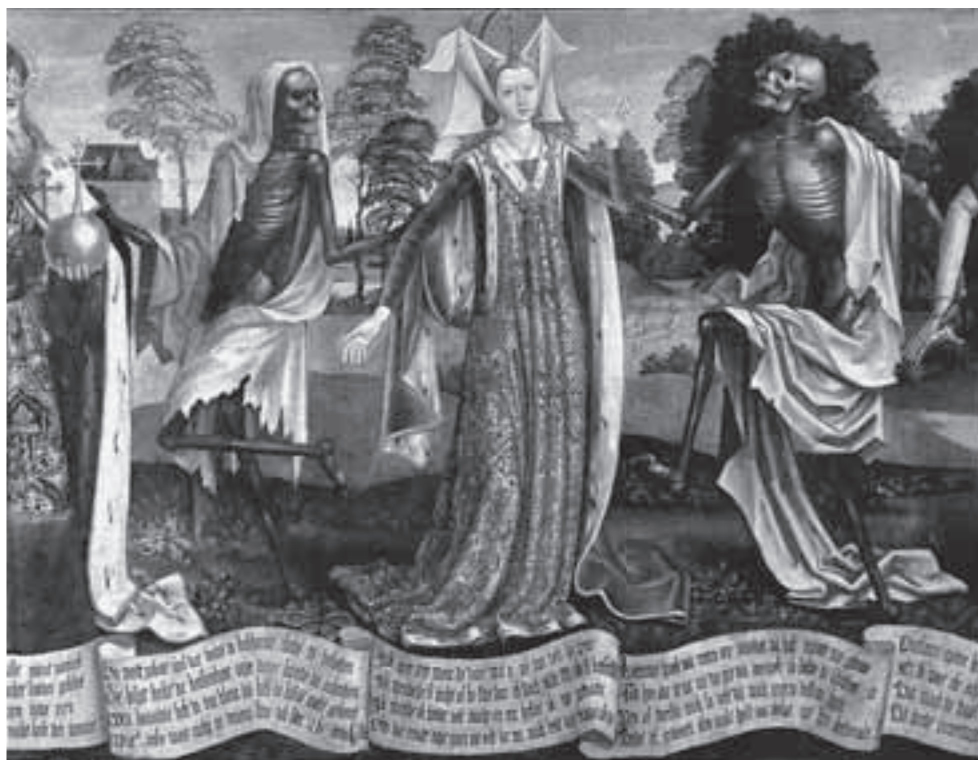
In this regard, it is worth remembering how physical geography and climate are involved, how the wood which grows in abundance in this region actually could be fashioned into other products. Oak, which serves better than pine for making the hulls of ships, and pine, which can serve for masts, were shipped from the Baltic region for ship manufacture. But oak might also be used for altarpieces, both for carved sculpted images and for painted ones. Wood retables made out of Baltic wood were produced not only in northern German centers such as Lübeck but also in the major ateliers in the Low Countries, and then shipped back to the Baltic.[18]

The religious works of art which so originated certainly followed patterns or routes of commerce. Since trade in the fifteenth century was still predominantly in the hands of the Hanseatic League, art, including altarpieces, spread in the area along with other goods in which Hanseatic merchants traded. In this way, it can be seen that a dominant Hansa center such as Lübeck possessed workshops which were important for the

---

17 The latest information on the building is provided by M. Córdova Tello, *El convento de San Miguel de Huejotzingo, Puebla. Arqueología histórica*, México 1992.

18 These patterns and the trade in altarpieces are studied in general in J. von Bonsdorff, *Kunstproduktion und Kunstverbreitung im Ostseeraum ds Spätmittelalters*, Finska Fornminnesföeningens Tidskrift 99, Helsinki 1993.



Bernt Notke. Dance of Death. St Nicholas' Church in Tallinn/Reval. End of 15th century. Photo: S. Stepaško.

making of objects that were sent to many parts of the region. And so it is that works by Bernt Notke, fragments of whose Dance of Death frieze originally for the Marienkirche in Lübeck itself can now be seen in Tallinn/Reval,[19] appear in many places around the Baltic. Notke's famed group of St. George is found in the St. Nicholas Church in Stockholm (1489), but altarpieces by him were also made for places such as Aarhus in Denmark, or for the hospital of the Holy Spirit (1485) in Tallinn.[20]

Lübeck, in this regard, may, however, be compared to the even better known centers of trade and manufacture (particularly of linen and woolen goods) which existed in the Low Countries. Indeed in the fifteenth century they were still linked, because the Hanseatic network of commerce and circulation extended to what are now Belgium and the Netherlands, as well as including the Baltic littoral. A Hanseatic Kontor existed in Bruges, where the German-born painter Hans

19 It might be noted that the present paper, which attempts to preserve the lecture form in which it was first delivered, was originally given as a lecture in front of this painting in Tallinn.

20 The Estonian examples mentioned here and elsewhere are now comprehensively studied in K. Kodres (ed.), *Eesti Kunsti Ajalugu/ History of Estonian Art*, Vol. 2, 1520–1770, Tallinn 2005. A new, full monograph on Notke remains, however, a desideratum of scholarship.

Memling worked. His pictures were sought after in Lübeck itself, where the Passion Altarpiece (1491) painted for that city still remains. The presence of the most famous early Netherlandish altarpiece in the region, Memling's *Last Judgment* altarpiece (1467–1471), now in Danzig (Gdańsk), can also be linked to this trade; the painting was seized by privateers in the service of the Hanseatic League and taken to Danzig in 1473.[21]

From the second quarter of the sixteenth century, other centers in Flanders and Brabant began to challenge the old Hanseatic ports for commerce. Instead of the older Flemish towns of Bruges and Ghent, other cities such as Antwerp, Brussels and, to a lesser degree, Mechelen/Malines came into importance, both for the production of works of art and for trade.[22] Netherlandish importance in the export and circulation of altarpieces did not cease. Over forty altarpieces, winged retables with painted panels and carved figures manufactured in Antwerp, Brussels, and Mechelen, datable mainly to the sixteenth century, are still to be found in Sweden. There are also many Netherlandish altarpieces in Denmark, including the main altarpiece of the cathedral in Roskilde.[23] Scattered works also appear in the present-day Baltic states.[24] Moreover, the Reformation did not put an end to this trade: even after the Protestant Reformation was well under way, Marten van Heemskerck's large altarpiece of 1538–1541, which had originally been painted for Alkmaar in Holland, found its way to the Linköping Cathedral in Sweden, where it still stands.[25]

People are involved in cultural transfer too, and transfer can be more a process of exchange, when it comes to religious art as well as to other forms. Michael Sittow, who for outsiders is probably Tallinn's most famous native-born artist, is a good example of

---

21 This familiar story deserves further attention. See for the background in Bruges M. P. J. Martens, "Some Aspects of the Origins of the Art Market in Fifteenth-Century Bruges", M. North, D. Ormrod (eds.), *Markets for Art 1400–1800*, Aldershot 1998, p. 19–28. Aspects of the situation are studied in T. Abel, A. Mänd, R. Rast (eds.), *Eesti kunstisidemed Madalmaadega 15.–17. sajandil. Püha Lucia legendi meistri Maarja altar 500 aastat Tallinnas/Die Kunstbeziehungen Estlands mit den Niederlanden in den 15.–17. Jahrhunderten. Der Marienaltar des Meisters der Lucialegende 500 Jahre in Tallinn,* Tallinn 2000.

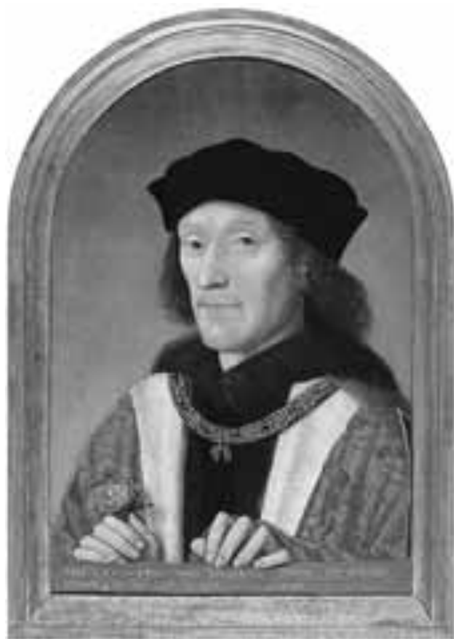
22 For Antwerp, see F. Vermeylen, *Paintings for the Market. Commercialization of art in Antwerp's Golden Age*, Studies in European urban history 2, 1100–1800, Turnhout 2003 and T. DaCosta Kaufmann, "Antwerpen als künstlerisches Zentrum und sein Einfluß auf Europa und die Welt", H. Borggrefe et. al. (eds.). *Hans Vredeman de Vries und die Renaissance im Norden*, Munich 2002, p. 41–50.

23 See Gh. Dervaeaux-Van Ussel, "De antwerpse retables in Zweden," and S. F. Plathe, "Brabantine carved altarpieces in Denmark," H. Nieuwdorp (ed.), *Antwerp Altarpieces 15th-16th centuries*, Antwerp 1993, p. 89–93 and 94–110.

24 These are accounted for in Eesti kunstidemed Madalmaadega 2000 and Eesti kunsti ajalugu 2005.

25 See in general T. DaCosta Kaufmann,"Ways of Transfer of Netherlandish Art", *Netherlandish Artists in Gdańsk in the Time of Hans Vredeman de Vries*, Gdańsk 2006, p. 13–22.

this. It was probably the renown of Memling's workshop throughout the Baltic in the later fifteenth century, and the commercial connections existing through the Hansa to Bruges, that induced Sittow to go to Memling's atelier in Bruges, where he is assumed to have trained.[26]



Michel Sittow. Portrait of Henry VII, King of England. Ca 1505. The National Portrait Gallery, London.

But wider geographical links and comparisons helped determine the subsequent locations of Sittow's work. And this suggests that the geography of art, as it pertains to the Baltic, not only involves acculturation, whereby cultural influences go in one direction, but also of trans-culturation, a process which may also result from reception, hence involving a flow of cultural goods or ideas in two or more directions. Because Flanders was long connected commercially with Spain (and fell under the Spanish yoke through the Burgundian inheritance in the early sixteenth century), the fame of Netherlandish workshops also reached the Iberian peninsula, where, indeed, famous Netherlandish artists such as Rogier van der Weyden are thought to have traveled. Spanish nobles, including monarchs, collected paintings done in a Netherlandish manner: this accounts for the presence of Netherlandish paintings, again often on Baltic wood, in Spain. Hence, we may find the Tallinn painter Sittow contributing panels, alongside the artist Juan de Flandes (John of Flanders), to the altarpiece known as that of the Catholic kings.[27]

With the Reformation, the notion of the church was no longer unitary. Nevertheless, both the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Reformation had an impact both on construction of church buildings and on their furnishings. Here again, patterns of artistic geography may be seen to have been at work, affecting issues of material, style and iconography in relation to the circulation of ideas. A tendency exists to think of the Baltic area as a Protestant sea; even Jan Białostocki, the illustrious Polish scholar who gave an important talk thirty years ago on the artistic geography of the

26 For the latest on Sittow see J. Maiste, "Michel Sittow – Tallinna mees", Eesti kunsti ajalugu 2005, p. 15–27.

27 See particularly T.-H. Borchert (ed.), *Age of Van Eyck: the Mediterranean world and early Netherlandish painting, 1430–1530*, New York 2002.

region, did so.[28] But, in fact, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the area was very much contested by adherents of different confessions, as repeated wars in Poland suggest. Church architecture (and art) also played a role in the field of competition. Here the history of two churches built in Stockholm in the sixteenth century, at the behest of the Catholic King Johan III, are instructive. Johan III, who by the way was also responsible for bringing the Heemkerck painting to Linköping, was also the patron of the reconstruction of the Klara Church on the site of a former Clare convent in Norrmalm, Stockholm, and also for stimulating the original plans of the St. James' Church there.[29]

By the late sixteenth century, Renaissance architecture and interior designs had already come to Sweden, where they had been brought by some Italians, the Pahrs, another example of cultural transfer. The king had employed this style for a chapel built in his own castle at Kalmar, in southern Sweden, where the plasterwork in the ceiling recalls sixteenth-century work in Lombardy.[30] So it is not as if this style were unknown. But for the Klara Church in Stockholm, and originally for the St. James' Church, another material and style were chosen. These more public monuments were built in brick, and also display ogive windows with tracery, pointed vaults, and other characteristics which may be associated with the Gothic style.

Comprehension of this style can be gained in relation to the local tradition which we have been discussing: brick was the model material traditionally used for church architecture in the region, and the gothic was also a traditional style for the place, as seen in the St. Nicholas' Church in Stockholm and other earlier structures in Scandinavia. Furthermore, certain other features of the St. James' Church, namely the massive attached buttresses on the facade of the church, and the general effect of massiveness that it provokes, remind us of the fortress monasteries and churches of other times and places. They, again, provide a local recollection, and also may, again, be significant as an expression of embattled Catholicism. It is more than reasonable to hypothesize that the choices of material and style were intentional, meant to connect with the local traditions. The

---

28 J. Białostocki, "The Baltic Area as an Artistic Province", *Hafnia. Copenhagen Papers in the History of Art* 4 (1976), p. 11–23. See further T. DaCosta Kaufmann, "Das Ostseeraum als Kunstregion: Historiographie, Stand der Forschung und Perspektiven künftiger Forschung", M. Krieger, M. North (eds.), *Land und Meer. Kultureller Austausch zwischen Westeuropa und dem Ostseeraum in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Cologne, Weimar, Vienna 2004, p. 9–21.

29 The discussion of the Klara Church in this and the following paragraphs is based on K. Neville, *Klara Church and the Swedish Counter-Reformation*, Uppsala University. Studies in Art History 2, Uppsala 2001.

30 See L. O. Larsson, "Palladios Erben in Schweden. Probleme der Legitimität", *Wege nach Süden, Wege nach Norden: Aufsätze zu Kunst und Architektur*, Kiel 1998, p. 36–57; J. Bracker (ed.), *Palladio: Bauen nach der Natur. Die Erben Palladios in Nordeuropa*, Ostfildern 1997, p. 213–228, particularly 214–217.

buildings seem to be saying this Catholic church is the representative of the true, local, Christian tradition. This element of choice in relation to locality is important, once one realizes that the architect of the church, Willem Boy, was from Mechelen.

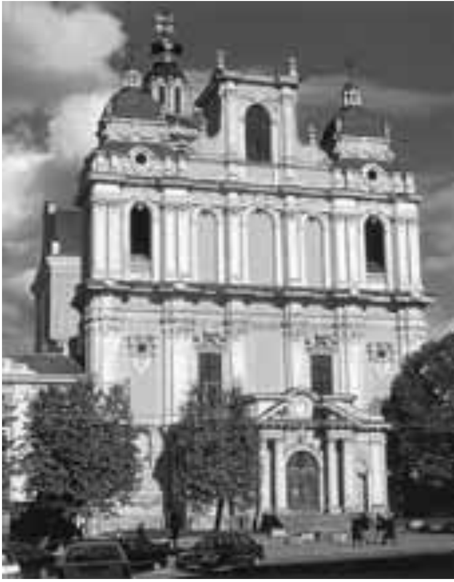
Again, a comparative perspective helps establish this hypothesis. The first Counter-Reformation churches, namely those built for the Jesuits in areas of northwestern Germany, and some other churches for the orders in the Low Countries in the seventeenth century, also make a similar appeal. For example, the Church of St. Peter and Paul in Munster, and that of the Ascension of the Virgin in Cologne, were deliberately built in a gothic style, using local stone at a time when the renaissance and, indeed, the incipient baroque were already in favor in Northern Europe.[31]

By the seventeenth century, changes had already begun to occur in matters of material and style, and these had an effect, as well, on church building, especially from the mid-century onward. Once again, geographical matters, such as materials and their circulation, acted with the transfer of styles to produce distinctive architecture in a time of confessional conflict. At this time, cultural transfer made up for what might otherwise be regarded as a lacuna. That is to say, now stone came to be favored as a material for architecture. While, in the early eighteenth century, Nicodemus Tessin the Younger proposed using local stone such as that from Gotland or Åland for foundations, in the mid- seventeenth-century, the Swedish nobleman Sterling Rosenhane already spoke more generally of the qualities of stone architecture. Even though he was speaking of manor houses, Rosenhane made a point that can be extended further. Rosenhane advocated the use of stone, not only because it is warmer, more truthful and more lasting, but because it is more decorous.[32] This can also be seen in the increasing use of stone for churches.

A further point is, however, to be made about style. For it is clear that up-to-date innovations in architectural style also entered into the choice of church forms. Here, however, the choice of style also speaks for confessional affiliations. In the Baltic lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the first Jesuit church in Vilnius, a work dedicated to St. Casimir (Kazimierz), was erected in the style by a local architect, Jan Frankiewicz, in the years 1604–1616. This expressed a form that was deliberately imported from models created in Rome by architects such as Maderno in Rome, and in its variants was first sponsored by the Crown in buildings in Krakow. Many later seventeenth-century churches in Lithuania also responded to Italian examples, such as the Trinitarian church in Antakalnis, which was inspired by Borromini's Church of St. Ivo in Rome, or the monastery church in Pozailis, where Longhena's St. Maria

31 See Kaufmann 2004, p. 247–250.

32 See Kaufmann 2003a, p. 270–271.



Church of St. Casimir in Vilnius. 1604–1749. Photo: K. Kodres.

della Salute in Venice served as a model for a church on the Lithuanian plateau.[33]

Protestant buildings in a more classicizing idiom, inspired by the tradition of Palladio or Scamozzi, appear almost as a visual response to such buildings. Their designs correspond to the more severe and regular current of contemporaneous architecture. Many architects, significantly, came from the Netherlands, or were inspired by Netherlandish designs, or by French ones, and some figures, such as Jean de la Vallée, were French. The point perhaps should not be overstressed, because the Netherlander Tylman van Gameren was also the major architect of the time in Catholic Poland.[34] So it might rather be said that art is related to commerce, to the trade in materials, and in "good taste", as Baldeloch Noldus has suggested.[35] It is notable that, as the Dutch began to dominate the carrying trade from the later sixteenth century, and especially during the seventeenth, works from or by artists and architects from the northern Netherlands also appeared increasingly on the Baltic littoral and in its hinterland. Sweden provides a good example, because the De Geers, who were involved in the exploitation of Swedish iron mines, were also responsible for the introduction of Dutch Palladian architecture and Dutch garden styles to Sweden. Eventually, these styles came to the area of what is now Estonia.

This relation of art, trade and materials can also be put in a comparative perspective. From the remarkable survival under the sea off the west Australian coast of a stone portal made out of Westphalian stone, we know that prefabricated portals in stone were shipped to various parts of the world. In this instance, a Palladian or Serlian portal was connected with the trade of the Dutch East India Company, because it was

33 A good pictorial overview, with some text, is provided by S. Arunas (ed.), *Barockführer durch Litauen*, Vilnius 1997. See further A. Langer, D. Popp (eds.), *Barocke Sakralarchitektur in Wilna. Verfall und Erneuerung*, Marburg 2002.

34 For a comprehensive overview of these phenomena, see Bracker 1997; further Ch. Anderson et al., *Palladio and Northern Europe. Books, Travellers, Architects*, Milan 1999. Van Gameren is treated most recently in E.-J. Goossens (ed.), *Tilman Van Gameren, 1632–1706: a Dutch architect to the Polish court*, Amsterdam 2002.

35 B. Noldus, *Trade in Good Taste. Relations in Architecture and Culture between the Dutch Republic and the Baltic World in the Seventeenth Century*, Architectura Moderna 2, Turnhout 2005.

intended probably to go to Batavia, modern Jakarta, where the ship on which it was loaded, the Batavia, was heading when it sank.[36]

Finally, to turn to other sorts of sculpture within churches, and consider again the issue of material, the absence of proper stone, especially for carving, would have made it even more prized than wood for sculpture. In the Middle Ages, Baltic stone from Gotland had been a material which was often employed for sculpture[37], and thus shipped around the region, as alabaster from England, from around Nottingham, had also been. In the sixteenth century, reliefs and small statuettes in alabaster, a Mechelen specialty, were also broadly dispersed; this, for example, is suggested by reference to items in alabaster in Danzig inventories, and the existence of the decorative panels in the cathedral of Lübeck by the Antwerp sculptor Willem van den Broecke (called Paludanus).[38] While, in Lithuania, marble from Debno and elsewhere and from Belgian sources was used for altarpieces and statues of saints, a new importance was given to other forms of sculpture in what became predominantly Protestant territories, in the lands dominated by Sweden and Denmark. Here pulpits, epitaphs and other grave monuments came to the fore. Especially for the latter sorts of monuments, which were meant to commemorate the deceased through eternity, a more lasting kind of material, stone, was desirable also because, beyond its decorous associations, it was rare in the Baltic.

Hence, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries alabaster, limestone and even marble were shipped, carved or uncarved, from the Low Countries, to be used in monuments in the lands around the Baltic.[39] Epitaphs and tombs with figures and reliefs in alabaster were manufactured in the Antwerp workshop of Cornelis Floris, and then sent to places such as Königsberg and Roskilde, where they were set up as ducal and royal funerary monuments. Netherlandish artists also came to ply their trade in the region: hence, the appearance of Willem van den Blocke in Gdansk, or Arent Passer in Tallinn. Both were probably from the Low Countries, and both,

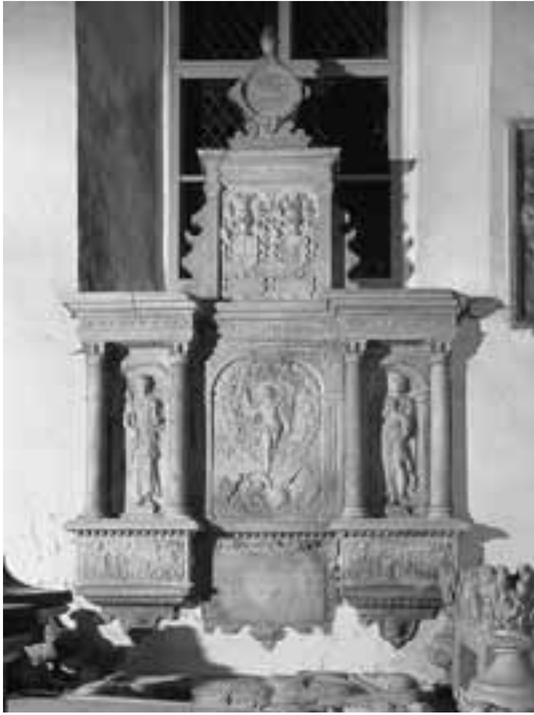
---

36 See J. Kastler ,V. Lüpkes (eds.). *Die Weser. Ein Fluss in Europa*, Vol. 2, Aufbruch in die Neuzeit, Holzminden 2000, p. 178–181, cat. no. 50 and 51.

37 Long ago the transfer of Gotland stone was pointed out: see J. Roosval, "Das baltisch-nordische Kunstgebiet", *Nordelbingen* 6 (1927), p. 270–290.

38 See M. K. Wustrack, *Die Mechelner Alabaster-Manufaktur des 16. und frühe 17. Jahrhunderts*, Europäische Hochschulschriften, Vol. XVIII, Kunstgeschichte 20, Frankfurt am Main und Bern 1982; A. Lipińska, "Mechelenskie reliefy alabastrowe w Polsce", *Rocznik Historii Sztuki* 36 (2001), p. 183–232; A. Lipińska, "Południoniderlanzkie oltarze alabastrowe (1550–1560) w zbiorach europejskich", M. Kapustki, A. Kozieł, P. Oszczanowski (eds.) *Niderlandyzm na Śląsku i w krajach ościennych*, Wrocław 2003, p. 180–193. Another essay on this topic by A. Lipińska is forthcoming.

39 The issue of trade in stone is treated in exemplary fashion in G. van Tussenbroek, *The Architectural Network of the Van Neurenberg Family in the Low Countries (1480–1640)*, Architectura Moderna 4, Turnhout 2006. See also Noldus 2005.



Arent Passer. Epitaph of the memorial of Pontus de la Gardie and Sofia Gyllenhielm in the Cathedral of Tallinn/Reval. 1589–1595. Photo: P. Säre.

Domenico Trezzini. Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul in St. Petersburg. 1712–1733. Photo: E. Urbel.

after passing through or residing in Gdansk, worked in stone, either imported or, in Passer's case, local. In either case, both carved monuments that reveal traces of what has been called the Vredeman style.[40]

Again, a comparative approach may also help. As recent exhibitions and symposia have demonstrated, the Vredeman style, too, can be placed in a broader context, with significance beyond the region. Monuments with such traits are found from England to Silesia and, if we were to look further, in the Americas.[41] The same might

40 See K. Kodres, "Der Vredeman de Vries-Stil als Markenzeichen Arent Passers in Reval/Tallinn", H. Borggrefe, V. Lüpkes (eds.), *Hans Vredeman de Vries und die Folgen*, Ergebnisse des in Kooperation mit dem Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Gdańsk durchgeführten internationalen Symposions am Weserrenaissance-Museum Schloß Brake 30. Januar bis 1. Februar 2004, Marburg 2005, p. 50–57. For the latest treatment of H. Johannsen, "Willem van den Blocke and his Monument (1585–86) for Christoph von Dohna in the Cathedral of Odense. An example of the Spread of the the Style of Cornelis Floris in the Baltic", Netherlandish Artists in Gdańsk 2006, p. 111–115, with further references.

41 See Niderlandyzm na Śląsku 2003; Hans Vredeman de Vries und die Renaissance im Norden 2002; Hans Vredeman de Vries und die Folgen 2005 and Netherlandish Artists in Gdańsk 2006.

be said for the spread of Netherlandish sculpture and sculptors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Let us conclude with a place that, while not exactly on the Baltic, lies nearby, and in a way culminates these developments at a date just after 1700, the terminus for this collection. This is St. Petersburg. There Peter created a place where sculptors and architects from Gdansk worked alongside Swiss, Italian and Roman architects such as Trezzini and Michetti, whose work at Kadriorg in Estonia is also familiar, and for that matter Netherlandish shipwrights. Although the tsar's religion was Orthodox, forms and materials remained the same.[42] The church on Peter and Paul Island is made out of brick, and its forms recall those of Hamburg, Stockholm or any other place with a church with a large spire.

When this church is seen in comparative perspective, it may be realized that artistic geography had an effect, even where an Italian-speaking architect was working on an Orthodox church. Cultural transmission combines with the longer conditions of materials and local traditions. In the end, art and architecture in relation to the church in the Baltic region may thus be seen to have occurred within a region where cultural transfer affects artistic monuments within the longue durée of a distinctive geography of art.[43]

---

42 An overview with good illustrations is provided by J. Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Architecture*, Chicago and London 1988.

43 Some of these issues discussed in this essay, but with a particular emphasis on the Netherlandish impact, are also considered in T. DaCosta Kaufmann, "Påverkan västerifrån: nederlänsk konst och arkitektur," Granländer 2003, p. 241–260.